

**JOURNAL OF THE REV. AMMI
R. ROBBINS, A CHAPLAIN IN
THE AMERICAN ARMY, IN THE
NORTHERN CAMPAIGN OF 1776**

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Journal of the Rev. Ammi R. Robbins, a Chaplain in the American Army, in the Northern Campaign of 1776 by Ammi R. Robbins

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AMMI R. ROBBINS

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JOURNAL.

A BRIEF journal of some of the more remarkable events in my tour to Canada.

Monday, March 18, 1776.—Took an affectionate leave of home, came to Canaan, met the Colonel and proceeded with a considerable retinue to Sheffield. Rev. Mr. Farrand* accompanied us; he and I dined at brother Keep's.† Had a most agreeable interview, prayed together and parted in the most tender and friendly manner. Very bad riding, but proceeded to Coles' in Nobletown; lodged comfortably.

Tuesday, 19.—Rose early, and in company rode five miles to breakfast, cheerful and comfortable; proceeded to Kinderhook, thence to Greenbush, put out our horses, crossed the river at dark and came into Albany; lodged pretty well.

Wednesday, 20.—Found Colonel Buel and Major Sedgwick, agreed to put up with them. Drew our provisions and lodged on the floor on my mattress. May I be thankful for such comfortable entertainment. Went twice this day to visit and pray with a poor soldier of the Pennsylvania regiment under sentence of death; he appeared much affected but dreadfully ignorant.

Thursday, 21.—All the troops drawn up on the parade and the prisoner brought out blindfolded to his execution, when the General (Schuyler) stepped forth and in a moving and striking speech, pardoned the criminal. P. M., crossed the river, sent off my horse, wrote two letters, visited the graves

* Of Canaan.

† Rev. John Keep, of Sheffield, whose wife was a sister of the writer.

of those who died in the *French war* in this place ; found my dear uncle Foot's, dropped a tear over it ; returned to my soldier home ; slept comfortably.

Friday, 22.—We attend prayer with the regiment, morning and evening. Rode five miles to see a sick soldier, fear he cannot live, (Wright of Watson's company.) I have much respect shown me as chaplain by all the officers with whom I live, and can be intimate with Colonel Buel on serious subjects. We live in family way.

Saturday, 23.—Cannon arrived from New York to go forward. Walked and visited the sick ; at evening, Mr. Watson, a trustee of the Presbyterian church, waited on me with a request to preach to-morrow ; consented, if soldiers admitted. O for grace to bear testimony for God in this wicked city.

Lord's Day, 24.—Prayed in the family, then on parade with the regiment ; at 10½ went to church, preached from Hosea, "I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face." P. M., Micah, v, 5, "And this man shall be the peace." Used great plainness ; a large assembly and very attentive ; baptized two children. Kindly entertained after meeting at Mr. Smith's, one of the church. Elder Ager asks me to preach next sabbath.

Monday, 25.—After prayers, visited four sick soldiers of Capt. Downs's and Capt. Parmelee's company ; am thankful for comfortable health, eat and sleep well. We drink no spirits at all, and I find it best unless I have more fatigue. Nothing remarkable to-day.

Tuesday, 26.—Went up to Stillwater, visited David Wright who died before night. Saw our people at Stillwater who seemed exceedingly rejoiced at my coming ; prayed and sung on the parade at night, appointed a sermon next morning at 10 o'clock ; will God bless his truth ; lodged at Esq. Palmer's.

Wednesday, 27.—Visited the sick and prayed with them, preached at 10 o'clock in Mr. Campbell's meeting house,

dined with Esq. Palmer ; P. M., returned with Doct. Swift to Albany ; cordially received, &c.

Thursday, 28.—After prayers, attended the execution of a sentence of court martial upon three poor Pennsylvania soldiers, who received thirty-nine lashes each. The whole army drawn up.—P. M., the army marched round the city, a formidable appearance. Wrote to my father, brother Starr* and my wife ; General Thomas is arrived in town.

Friday, 29.—Dined at Elder Edgars's, gentlemanly man and pleasant family ; P. M., viewed the movements of the Jersey and Pennsylvania troops in a large field. Wrote by request to Lieut. Wright of Winchester. His son is sick.

Saturday, 30.—Visited two sick soldiers, fear they will not live, visited sundry under officers and soldiers who showed me much respect and seemed to take reproofs well, &c.—nothing remarkable.

Lord's Day, 31.—Attended again in the Presbyterian church, A. M., preached on Christian armor. P. M., Ex. xxxiii, 15. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." Great assembly, sundry Jersey and Pennsylvania officers and others ; Gen. Schuyler's family and aid-de-camp all day, was enabled to speak with great freedom, blessed be God. Took refreshment at Mr. Watson's, visited the sick at the barracks, was amazingly shocked and pained to see the wickedness of the people of the city and the land on the Sabbath,—'tis a high play day ; attended evening prayers and near one thousand people flocked round from their diversions, was enabled to be large and solemn in prayer for this poor city and the ignorant spectators.—Oh, that some poor wretch might be taken hold of ; returned to my quarters excessively weary and spent ; Col. B. is a kind father, brother and dear companion, a great support and comfort to me, may I be thankful.

* Rev. Peter Starr, of Warren, whose wife was a sister of the writer.

Monday, April 1.—Slept well and feel greatly strengthened; was applied to, to baptize a child, whose father is of the Church of England, but a very kind, catholic man; wrote home and to brother Starr; nothing remarkable.

Tuesday, 2.—Dined at Elder Edgar's. P. M., attended a funeral of one of Capt. Troop's company, the third that has died in the regiment; spent the evening with Major Thomas; received a letter from brother Chandler,* reviving.

Wednesday, 3.—We received orders to proceed, I came in a bateau to Half Moon, in company with Col. Buel; wrote to brother Starr.

Thursday, 4.—I marched on foot with the Colonel and under officers to Stillwater, 12 miles, not greatly fatigued; entertained most kindly at Esq. Palmer's, attended prayers at sunset with two companies, lodged with Col. Buel.

Friday, 5.—Proceeded in a bateau up the river from Stillwater, arrived at night at Saratoga, spent the evening agreeably with a number of officers at Mr. McNeil's, lodged well, blessed be God.

Saturday, 6.—All our people at and near the landing; exercised and walked around with the officers in A. M.; sundry poorly among the soldiers, who must be left behind. P. M., at 2 o'clock, Col. Buel and I set out and came to Fort Edward, lodged at Esq. Smith's, Fort Edward is mouldering down, it compasses more than an acre of ground.

Lord's Day, 7.—Rose early, walked four miles to breakfast. It rains little, though called to march, yet a pleasant Sabbath; profitable discourse and meditation, sweet to think of dear friends in New England all now in the worship of God, and praying for us. We walked moderately, soldiers scattering along, but we by ourselves as two pilgrims; no other refreshment for eleven miles than brook water; when within four miles of lake George, stopped to view the place of the fight in the year 1755, and the manner of Col.

* Rev. Chandler Robbins, D.D., Plymouth, Mass.

Whiting's retreat, saw where Col. Williams was killed, old Hendrick, &c. At four P. M. arrived at Lake George, went into the fort, dined comfortably ; at eve, sundry officers and soldiers came up, gave a word of exhortation, sung and prayed near the water, the poor carpenters very attentive and solemn. Fort William Henry is so gone, that scarcely any traces are left. Fort George is a small stone fort, with a convenient brick barrack in the midst, containing six rooms for soldiers. The lake is much less than I expected, environed with high craggy mountains ; a convenient wharf at the end, and a large number of fine bateaux about it ; barracks built for the accommodation of several regiments of soldiers. The ice is very rotten, and we hope will be gone in eight or ten days ; Col. Buel has the command here till we proceed down the lake to Ticonderoga.

Monday, 8.—Breakfasted with Col. Buel and two gentlemen of Montreal, one of whom, is just arrived from England, entertaining conversation, &c. ; walked about the lake, viewed the works ; there are about a hundred new and large bateaux, and many more in building ; dined at Jones' with the same gentlemen, walked over to see the ruins of *Fort William Henry*, the French lines, &c. It rains this P. M., prayed and sung at night in the large new barrack, great numbers attended ; this day two companies of Pennsylvania troops came in, and sundry of ours, numbers are left sick on the road, two or three here are very sick, and many poorly ; how easy 'tis for God to bless or blast our designs.

Tuesday, 9.—The ice on the lake wastes fast—our troops come in thick, and two companies of the Pennsylvania Greens arrived. Pleasant day.

Wednesday, 10.—Sailed on the lake a little for diversion, visited Capt. Watson's company who live in tents by the east mountain. This day Col. Buel and I moved into the fort, at night bags and baggage came ; the Jersey regiment arrived.

Thursday, 11.—It rained hard all night, high winds this morning, the lake opens fast; news to-day of the taking of a large prize by the American fleet, which was going to the southward—six hundred barrels of powder and two hundred cannon. News of Gen. Spencer with five regiments coming after us—rejoicing—at night, Gen. Schuyler arrived.

Friday, 12.—It snows hard, can scarcely go out, but visited Gen. Schuyler, P. M. He is a very complaisant man, &c.

Saturday, 13.—Visited several sick in the Hospital, nothing very remarkable; received two letters from home, the first gave me pain, but the second relieved me, giving an account that my daughter is likely to live. Oh, that I might be truly thankful and weaned from worldly enjoyments—many officers of the other regiments attended prayers.

Lord's Day, 14.—Agreed to preach in the lower barrack, near the lake, because uncomfortable abroad. A. M., preached from Isa. xxvii. 4, 5, "Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." P. M., Malachi, iii. 2, "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." P. M., Gen. Thomas and most all the officers of the army present—very attentive—prayed that night on parade, and was much wearied. This day Lieut. Gaylord died, ten miles from here on his way home, the fourth in our regiment—may the living lay it to heart.

Monday, 15.—Very pleasant day, general court martial. Capt. Watson to be tried, accused of disorder, &c., by Esq. Smith of Fort Edward, is acquitted with honor; conversed with Gen. Thomas about the state of our country, found him easy and communicative. Gen. Schuyler gave me the offer to go in what boat I pleased to Canada, &c.;